

Sharon and David Flannigan live in Bracknell with Daniel (10) and Adam (14).

Six months at Kennel Lane transformed Daniel into a happy, confident young boy

Daunting choice

Daniel was diagnosed with autism very early, and Sharon found the prospect of deciding on her son's future education a very daunting experience.

"The thought of deciding Daniel's future education when he was only three years old was quite frightening," recalls Sharon. "We were given lots of choices including a mainstream school and we constantly talked about everything to weigh up the pros and cons. However, when we visited Kennel Lane it just stood out. The school felt so much more relaxed, open and calm. I felt very comfortable and at home there."

Settling in

Daniel settled in well, but the staff were quick to let Sharon know of any problems.

“He was very young when he started and in the early days there were one or two little settling in incidents,” she says. “For example if he was doing a puzzle and another child tried to take it away he might get very upset and hit out, but the school was always really good, and never made me feel guilty or bad about Daniel. They let me know straight away, but it was mainly in case his behaviour or demeanour might change at home. I really appreciated that.”

Big improvements

Sharon is now delighted with Daniel’s behaviour.

“We first started to notice improvements within about six months,” she says. “When he first started he was a very stereotypically autistic child – for example if someone knocked at the door and I invited them in he wouldn’t break off from what he was doing or acknowledge that anyone was there. The change in him is amazing. He now responds to people’s questions and engages well. I’m so pleased.”

Home from home

Daniel is very happy at school and Sharon thinks this is because the staff know him so well.

“He absolutely loves school and is so happy,” she says. “The staff really understand him and his habits and things he likes and doesn’t like. This helps Daniel to feel like he’s in a second home.”

Setting objectives

Parents are kept fully informed of their child’s progress.

“Every term I attend an IEP meeting,” says Sharon. “I meet the teachers and get an update on Daniel’s progress and his objectives for the next term. Parents can also ask for any concerns to be included in the plan. For example Daniel went through a phase of wetting himself at school. This regression really concerned me, but the staff were fantastic and gave me lots of advice. They monitored him closely and asked him frequently if he needed to go to the toilet and with their support the problem quickly resolved. It was pure teamwork between home and school, as Daniel realised the rules were the same wherever he was.”



A helping hand

Sharon highly recommends Kennel Lane.

“I am so grateful to the school for everything they have done for Daniel and the whole family,” she says. “If ever we needed help or someone to talk to there is always someone available. You never feel you are a nuisance and are always welcome.

“When you have a child with special needs you just want to protect them and really need to trust the people you are handing them over to. At Kennel Lane they understand that. They have a way of communicating with Daniel very simply so that he understands why he sometimes feels sad or finds something difficult. He is now happy and confident, which is wonderful.”

What Daniel says:

“I like everything about school, but my favourite things are music, food technology, swimming and horse riding.”

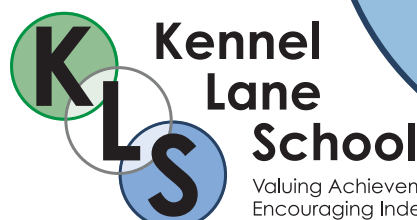
Kennel Lane School
Kennel Lane
Bracknell
Berkshire
RG42 2EX

Email: secretary@kennellaneschool.com

Website: www.kennellaneschool.com

Tel: 01344 483872

Fax: 01344 304224



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